

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Your child will soon be starting an integrative unit to study the role of parks in our community and what makes a park a good place for people to visit. Your child will become a park planner to learn how plants grow, the kinds of play and recreational activities appropriate for a park and how to work with others to solve problems. Students will also be developing literacy skills as they talk, write and read about their experiences.

The teaching approach I will be using is called Storypath, which was originally developed in Scotland. This approach is built on the key principle that learning, to be meaningful, has to be memorable, and that we can use children's enthusiasm for story-making to teach important content and skills. Active learning, cooperation, critical thinking, and reflection are essential components of the process. As the Storypath develops, children will gain a sense of ownership for their learning as they tackle the problems presented.

As events unfold, ask your child to share with you what is happening in the Storypath. You may find that they will want to learn more about particular topics at home by discussing the parks they have visited or the kinds of features they would like in a park.

You are welcome to visit our classroom during our Storypath time. You will be pleased to see children confronting important issues that relate to how parks are created and used and how communities come together to solve problems. I hope you will discuss these experiences with your child. At the conclusion of the unit, we will dedicate the park; I hope you can visit our classroom for that event.

Sincerely,

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **LETTER OF INVITATION**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(address)

Dear Students,

I would like to invite you to become park planners for our community. Your class has been selected because it is my understanding that you are hard workers, willing to learn, and can imagine a park “just right” for our community. The first task is to plan the park. The second task is to create the park. Both tasks will involve a lot of work, and it will be important that you can work well together. There will be problems to be solved along the way. I believe that you are the perfect class for such a project. Please let me know if you will accept the invitation.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Make up a name and title or select a name and title of someone in your community)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# LETTER OF RESPONSE

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(address)

Dear Students,

Thank you for agreeing to plan and create the park. I am very pleased that you have decided to do this work. The place that we are planning for the park is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Insert name of location for the park)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert appropriate description or use the one below)

This is an open space on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Insert name of street)  
The place is now empty and has a few trees and plants. There is a creek that winds its way through the setting. People of all ages will make use of the park. I want the park to be a place where people can enjoy trees, plants, and flowers; have a place to play; and have picnics with their families. I hope you can plan a park that will meet these uses.

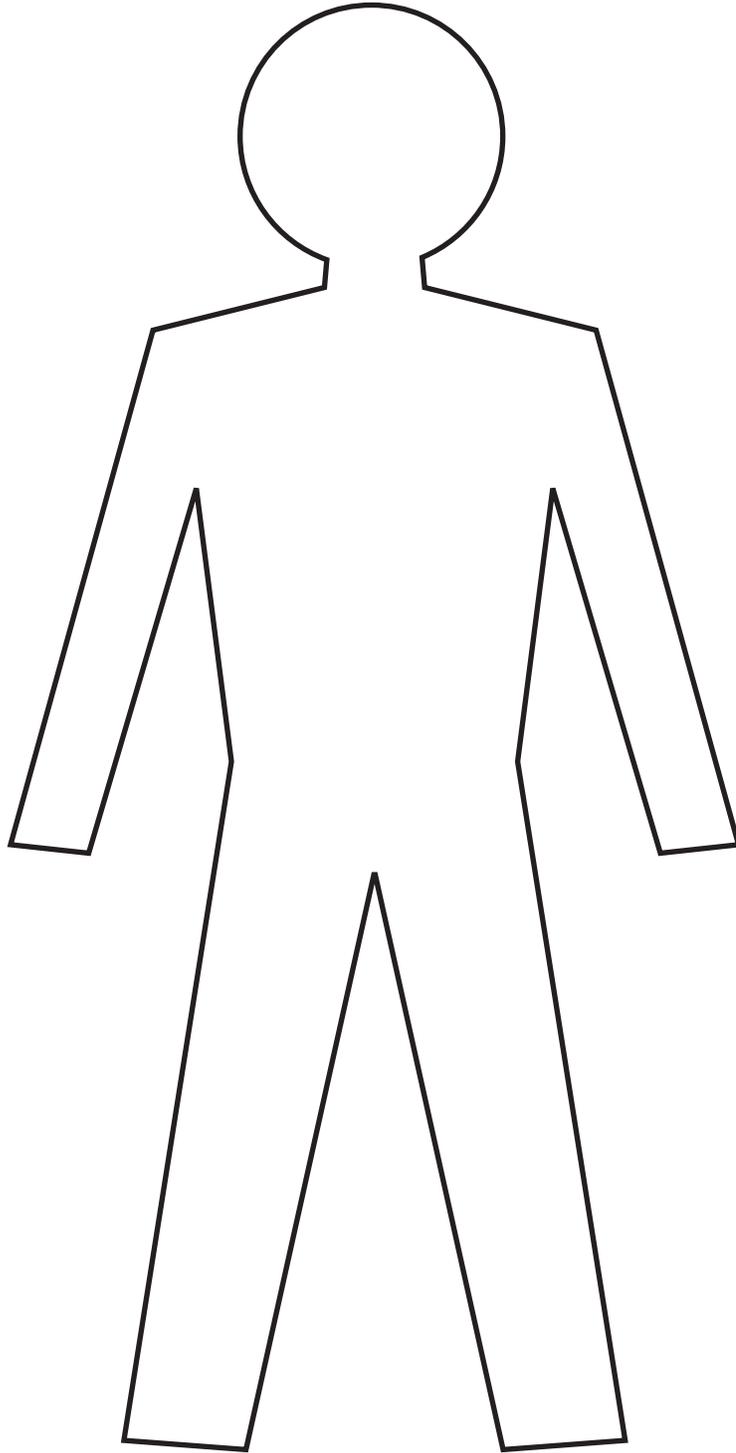
I need your plans by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(date)

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Make up a name and title or select a name and title of someone in your community)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTLINE OF A FIGURE**



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT PLANTS NEED TO GROW**

<b>Air</b>	Plants take two gases from the air: carbon dioxide and oxygen. Carbon dioxide is used for photosynthesis. Oxygen is fuel for energy that helps plants breathe.
<b>Water</b>	Minerals in the water help plants grow. Water is taken in through the plant’s roots and carried up to the leaves.
<b>Temperature</b>	Plants require a specific temperature range. Some plants can grow in very hot climates, some in temperate, and some in cold. Over many years plants have adapted and thrived in different climates.
<b>Sunlight</b>	Most plants need sunlight to grow. The sunlight converts a plant’s food into usable energy to help it grow.
<b>Soil</b>	Soil helps the plant to grow by providing nutrients (or minerals). The soil also holds the plant erect.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### SELF-ASSESSMENT: WORKING TOGETHER

	Always	Sometimes	Not often/Never
1. We listened to each other's ideas.			
2. We shared the work.			
3. We helped each other.			
4. We did careful work.			
5. We worked together to solve problems.			

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NEWS ARTICLE**

# LOCAL NEWS

## PROBLEMS IN OUR LOCAL PARK

Yesterday it was reported that older children in the park were unwilling to let the younger children use the play equipment. While the younger children are taking turns and waiting to play on the equipment, the older children tell them "You can't play here!" They often tease the younger children, telling them they will fall and hurt

themselves so they can't use the play equipment. This is so unfair and hurtful.

This problem will be presented to the park planners to decide what to do. The park planners have worked hard to make this park a safe and friendly place for the community. What can be done?

